

Date: January 19, 2006

To: River Road/Santa Clara Transition Task Force
From: Jim Rapp
Via: David Reed, Transition Team Project Manager

RE: OUTCOMES of MEETINGS with RR/SC SERVICE PROVIDERS

Attached are the transcribed notes that David Reed and I took in the course of meetings with the two Fire Districts, the River Road Parks District, and two meetings with the City – the first with senior department staff and the second with City department heads. Everyone was provided with the November 25, 2005 version of the draft Strategic Framework template developed by the Task Force; and the November 24 version of the complete White Paper. I also produced (as per Rob Handy's suggestion) an "intermediate" document with the complete text of specific White Paper options pasted in next to the Framework strategies and actions. We all thought this would help to get the service providers better and more quickly get oriented, but in practice it proved to be too much paper! In the future I suggest with stick with just the White Paper Framework (with option and page number cross-references back to the White Paper).

The meetings were quite useful and informative, and the tone was generally very positive, although there were some concerns expressed (as can be seen by the notes), and of course the fire and parks districts are all suffering from varying degrees of difficult financial stress. In a couple of cases, the input of the service providers had some direct and very focused implications for the current Institutional strategies and options in the Framework, and one governance issue, and I point out these below. This is not to say that there weren't other concerns expressed with other strategies and options, these few were simply the most focused. It was also encouraging to hear the positive comments by both the City Manager and Assistant City Manager

FIRE DISTRICTS – The two Fire District had no interest in a consolidation, and their reasons were identical and (in my assessment) quite valid. City Fire backed up the local perspective on this issue. The two Districts also felt that boundary adjustments, service contracts, etc. would not solve the essential problem, and simply weren't practical or effective options. In contrast, the need for and willingness to sit down immediately and work out a fire service transition plan was well received by all parties.

The City's fire chief also held out some hope that current impediments (e.g.: union contract) to transfer of district volunteer brigades to the City service could be resolved

Accordingly, I think that Institutional Strategy #5, "Support and Sustain Fire Service Volunteer Institutions" has some real potential. For Institutional Strategy #7, the input of all three services providers indicates that the Task Force might want to drop the SECOND bulleted action under that strategy -- "consider possible service consolidations and/or contracts".

PARKS DISTRICT – While developing the Framework, the Task Force decided to split the Institutional Strategy relating to the River Road Parks and Recreation District into two parts – one “sustain” and other “expand”. Based on discussions with the Parks District, I think the wording of these two complimentary strategies hold up.

However, as the Parks Districts sees “expanding” recreation services into Santa Clara by contract essentially as a way to preserve and sustain their current base of Santa Clara customers, the Task Force may wish to consider recombining these two Framework Strategies back into a single “sustain” option.

City Boards and Commissions – The Framework implementation strategy to “designate non-City seats on all City boards and commissions” was countered with “City ordinances already permit non-City members on all City boards and commission except for the Budget Committee, and we would welcome more non-City applicants as we are always challenged in filling these committees”. As reflected in the meeting notes, City staff wasn’t too “high” on the idea of a non-City seat on the Council, but as this is essentially a political decision, I see no reason to drop this idea from the Framework at this point.

The Task Force may, however, wish to drop the “designated Board and commission seats” option, or substitute the suggestion that was made to empower the two Community Organizations to adopt and promote some sort of formal neighborhood nomination process for City boards and commissions

**Interviews with River Road /Santa Clara Service Providers re:
River Road /Santa Clara Transition and Heritage Strategy Framework**

Conducted by David Reed and Jim Rapp
December 12 and 13, 2005; and January 2, 2006
Notes by Jim Rapp and David Reed

River Road Parks and Recreation District (RR PRD)

Comments and Observations by Jim Lockard and Dale Weigandt

- Feel that the RR PRD could operate within a City structure, although at present the RR PRD can operate cheaper than the City for equivalent level of service
- RR PRD is already in effect serving River Road and Santa Clara, so a formal SERVICE expansion would not be a big change. RR PRD estimates that up to 50% of their patronage for recreation programs is from Santa Clara. A BOUNDARY expansion would be more problematic and actually less effective given the amount of annexation to Eugene in Santa Clara. RR PRD doesn’t see a boundary expansion as possible, but is very willing to serve Santa Clara thru contract with Eugene
- If Eugene were to aggressively build recreation facilities and provide recreation services in Santa Clara, the probable decline in Santa Clara patronage of RR PRD programs could “tip” the financial balance for the District
- RR PRD would be willing and able to provide for recreation services in Santa Clara under contract with the Eugene, provided the City accepted responsibility for facilities and parks.

RR PRD could never afford to build the recreation facilities needed in Santa Clara. RR PRD would lease facilities and work with schools to provide spaces for recreation services.

- RR PRD wouldn't see a contract with Eugene as an expansion as much as a way to sustain the District. A contract with Eugene would sustain their current Santa Clara customer base.
- RR PRD doesn't see how converting the District to a non-profit would be effective (this idea had been previously suggested by Eugene's Assistant City Manager). Converting to a non-governmental organization (NGO) would mean that RR PRD would lose their tax base and the Eugene support payments to the new NGO would also be problematic (e.g.: no longer a government to government transfer). PERHAPS conversion to an NGO would work at the point that tax revenues and City transfer payments no longer are sufficient, along with program fees, to keep the District operating
- Eugene's transfer payments to RR PRD are essential but need to be indexed to inflation/cost of service and the shrinkage in the RR PRD tax base as annexation progresses. The current formula does not provide for this. RR PRD would also seek an adjustment to the formula for costs of formally expanding recreation services to Santa Clara (such as new staff)
- A contract between RR PRD and Eugene for recreation services in Santa Clara would "respect" existing usage patterns and recognize the proximity of the two neighborhoods. RR PRD is not just "open" to such a contract; they would PREFER such a contract.

Santa Clara Rural Fire Protection District (SC Fire)

Comments and Observations by Fire Chief Skip Smith

- SC Fire agrees with Lane Fire's assessment that a merger of the two fire districts would in effect require increases taxes increases, as most SC Fire properties are lower tax producing residential properties with higher fire service costs. SC Fire does not consider a merger feasible under such circumstances.
- Eugene's Assistant City Manager has suggested a boundary change whereby all of Lane Fire's service territory within the Santa Clara neighborhood boundary is transferred to SC Fire. SC Fire feels this might help with District finances in the short-term but in the long-term the problem is the same – territory will continue to annex to Eugene to the eventual point that SC Fire can no longer financially sustain itself with tax revenues.
- SC Fire is now operating with a deficit budget and backfilling tax revenues shortfalls with reserves. SC Fire only has a "future" if annexation stops AND the City again contracts with District for fire service to in-City properties.
- SC Fire needs to know what is going on (and soon) with City and neighborhood plans so as to be able to plan for the future. SC Fire would welcome the development of a time-certain transition agreement and assets transfer plan with Eugene, Lane Fire, and the Santa Clara District (water district is included anticipating a similar pass-through contract as the one Eugene has with the River Road Water District for providing City fire protection to non-City properties in River Road)
- As SC Fire is non-union there would be no issues (as there might be with unionized Eugene and Lane Fire) with transferring or changing the District's volunteer fire brigade

City Of Eugene (Meeting #1, December 13, 2005)

Comments and Observations by Jim Carlson, Assistant City Manager; Kurt Yeiter, Planning Department; Johnny Medlin, Public Works/Parks; Linda Phelps, Police; Connie Bennett, Library; Steve Norris, Neighborhood Services; Mark Schoening, Public Works; Matt Schuler, Fire

- The group was very lukewarm to the idea of a non-City resident seat on the City Council (one of the Governance strategies included in the draft River Road/Santa Clara Framework document). As for appointment to City boards and commissions, the City already allows non-City residents to serve on these groups
- The Assistant City Manager was generally positive about the Framework, major concerns were with the non-City Council seat and residential infill ideas
- Group had serious concerns with the number of ideas and strategies in the Framework that provide for “special” option for River Road/Santa Clara. Concern was that such special options would have to be offered to all City neighborhoods. Parity among neighborhoods was considered to be a major issue and constraint; probably all the neighborhoods in Eugene need updating of their plans and have some special and unique needs
- Special provisions for River Road/Santa Clara [Institutional strategies](#) would [likely](#) only be viable as short-term allowances as part of a long-term transition to complete annexation.
- RR PRD doesn’t seem viable in the long-term, nor does SC Fire. Issues like the transfer of the volunteer fire brigade to City service, or contracts for recreation services, would have to be short-term allowances.
- The Framework ideas for green-frastructure and surface water management being integrated with parks and street systems may be complicated by the fact that Lane County is not “green-frastructure friendly”.
- The kind of community or neighborhood plan talked about in the Framework could not be a formal land use plan, perhaps an amalgamation of several City plans and program types? Discussion centered on when the transition planning process should address annexation as an end goal, particularly in the public process.
- The City is doing many of the things expressed in the Landscape portion of the Framework. Perhaps a response could be for the City to “catalog” and document these initiatives for the neighborhoods

Lane Fire and Rescue (Lane Fire)

Comments and Observations by Dale Borland, Deputy Fire Chief

- Merger with SC Fire would mean increases in taxes to sustain current service levels in the present Lane Fire service territory. The equation simply does not work for Lane’s property tax payers
- Transfer of Lane Fire territory within the Santa Clara neighborhood boundary to SC Fire would NOT be a “minor” issue for Lane Fire. 52% of the Lane tax base is within Santa Clara. Lane Fire considers the large industrial corridor within the UGB east of Santa Clara as the core of its service delivery area.
- Volunteers are an important part of the ability of Lane Fire to provide quality and cost effective fire protection services to the community. Feels transfer of the volunteer fire brigades to Eugene Fire would be “staunchly” opposed by the union

- Lane Fire is willing to be part of a discussion for a fire service transition plan for Santa Clara, and would like to see the City convene the three agencies to work together with openness and honesty to develop a plan with timelines.

City Of Eugene (Meeting #2, January 12, 2006)

Comments and Observations by Dennis Taylor, City Manager; Jim Carlson, Assistant City Manager; Angel Jones, Library, Recreation and Cultural Services Director; Tom Tallon, Fire Chief; Robert Lehner, Police Chief; Susan Muir, Planning and Development Director; Kurt Corey, Public Works Director; Lauren Chouinard, Human Resource and Risk Services Director.

- While there are many issues to sort out including blended tax rates and past history, Eugene Fire favors opening conversations with the two Fire Districts to work toward agreements for the transition of fire protection and EMS services.
- The Fire Chief also noted transition incentives that are still on the table, for example Eugene's offer the to SC Fire for no cost bay capacity for a 3-year period at the new City Fire station which would facilitate SC Fire transitioning out of their neighboring station. He also felt there was some possibility of working out some arrangement with the union for the volunteer fire brigades.
- Planning staff is struggling with their response to the Framework, including the implied demand for increased or new planning services and plans to unincorporated areas of River Road and Santa Clara and the potential impacts on Planning staff capacity to commit to such proposed initiatives and options; and perceived conflicts with some growth management policies and statutory provisions.
- There was a general concern expressed that the City would have difficulty establishing programs and/or making special allowances for just one or two neighborhoods; would therefore perhaps not have the capacity to apply such programs/allowances City-wide.
- The City Manager encouraged staff to look for new and creative approaches that would support the RR/SC transition plan goals, and that in turn might have positive impacts on other neighborhoods throughout the City. He encouraged staff to think about creative ways to conceptually embrace the neighborhoods ideas for strategies and incentives as a part of an annexation process.
- To create a voice in River Road and Santa Clara, staff discussed the positive benefits of non-residents serving on City committees. Non-residents can already serve on any City committee except the Budget Committee (State law stipulates that only residents can serve on this group). It was suggested that the RRCO and the SCCO could encourage or even nominate applicants for City committees. As with the earlier City meeting, the response to the idea of a non-City seat on the City Council was lukewarm.
- Most of the discussion centered on how staff could respond positively to the Draft Framework:

1. Identify existing mechanisms and activities that could support Framework initiatives and strategies.
 2. Identify new mechanisms and approaches that staff might consider or offer.
 3. Only then, identify existing constraints and obstacles that would prevent staff from embracing Framework initiatives and strategies.
- Assistant City Manager Jim Carlson was to coordinate the formal departmental responses along these lines